

# Naval Base Ventura County remembers 9/11



**Ventura County Supervisor for District Three, Kathy Long, tells of how the U. S. has become "A nation united..." during her remarks.**



**Members of NBVC's Weapons Department fire a 21-Gun Salute in honor of the victims of last year's 9/11 terrorist attacks.**



**Congressman Elton Gallegly, 23rd District, speaks on how America changed as a result of the attacks on 9/11.**



**Lt. William Frado and Lt. Matthew Army, flying "Vandy 1", demonstrate "The Very Loud Sounds Of Freedom" ending the 9/11 anniversary observance ceremony.**



**In honor of the victims of last year's 9/11 attacks on the United States a flag flown over the Pentagon was raised and lowered to half staff during NBVC's observance ceremony.**



**The ceremony audience stands to honor the American flag and all it represents while The Star Spangled Banner plays.**

**By JO2 Lynn Kirby**

*Lighthouse staff*

PORT HUENEME, Calif.—Local civic leaders joined 2,000 military and civilian members of the community here on the morning of Sept. 11 to remember the tragic events of 9/11 in an observance ceremony. The early-morning ceremony included military formations representing the major military commands at Naval Base Ventura County (NBVC) including NBVC; 31<sup>st</sup> Naval Construction Regiment; Naval Construction Training Center; Naval Air Warfare Center Weapons Division, Point Mugu; Naval Surface Warfare Center; and Commander Airborne Early Warning Wing Pacific. Representatives from each of those commands took a few moments to reflect on their command's activities in response to 9/11.

Key political figures in the local community were also speakers during the ceremony. In addition to the moving speeches, the ceremony also consisted of the raising of a flag that was flown over the Pentagon Aug. 14, a 21-gun salute to honor the innocent lives lost on that day, and an F-14 flyby by Air Test and Evaluation Squadron Nine (VX-9) Detachment, Point Mugu.

NBVC Commanding Officer Capt. Jim Rainwater talked about the importance of the military's role since 9/11 and commended everyone involved for their response to those tragic events. "In the first hours following the attacks, our military members and civilian employees implemented security measures that protected our interests. These same Sailors, Seabees, aviators, airmen and civilians stood by, ready to step up when the call went out," he said.

Rainwater also talked about support from the local community. "In the weeks and months that followed Sept. 11, the community supported the deploying squadrons and battalions who are home ported here. They made it possible for the hundreds of reservists mobilizing from Point Mugu and Port Hueneme to have adequate housing and facilities to process from. Once again, they prayed for a swift and safe return of all our service men and women," he said.

Congressman Elton Gallegly returned home to Ventura County to be with his constituents for the anniversary of 9/11. During his speech to the men and women of NBVC, he reflected on the events at the Capitol immediately following the attack on the Pentagon. "When the Pentagon was hit, members of Congress were rushed out of the Capitol quickly," he said. "That evening, we returned. We stood shoulder to shoulder on the steps of the Capitol – not as Democrats or Republicans, but as Americans – and we sang God Bless America."

Gallegly said 9/11 changed America as we knew it. "I firmly believe as a result of the attacks of 9/11, we are a stronger nation," he said.

County Supervisor Kathy Long said the attacks that were meant to destroy us did much more than was expected. "The terrorists who attempted to break us, got much more than they bargained for – they got a nation united," she said. "These attacks will forever tie the younger generation to their country."

After all had made their remarks, remembering the many lives lost 9/11, the Pentagon flag was raised as a bugler sounded "taps." The sad sound of the bugler's notes brought tears to many eyes.

At the close of the ceremony, the audience got a demonstration of the strength of the military forces with a 21-gun salute from 40mm guns and a VX-9 F-14 flyby. NBVC Chief Staff Officer Capt. Robert J. Westberg warned the crowds to prepare themselves for the "very loud sounds of freedom" as Vandy-1 flew overhead. The crowd cheered and applauded, as car alarms sounded in the distance.

In times of remembrance, you reflect back on days past, hopefully not to repeat the mistakes of yesterday. Rainwater left the audience with some words from Fighting Seabee John Wayne, who said, "Tomorrow is the most important thing in life. It comes to us at midnight very clean. It's perfect when it arrives, and it puts itself in our hands and hopes we've learned something from yesterday."